

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED SUPPRESSION OF *ZORILLA*

I. GEOFFROY, 1826. (Z.N.(S.) 758)

(see volume 19, pages 284-289)

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Though I am not a mammalogist the case of *Zorilla* vs. *Ictonyx* interests me very much and I venture therefore to give some comments. In my opinion the arguments used by both parties in this case involve various points which are not pertinent here and only confuse the issue.

(1) When describing his new genus *Zorilla*, I. Geoffroy St. Hilaire referred to only one nominal species: "*Mustela zorilla* et *Viverra zorilla* des auteurs systématiques". This species is *Viverra zorilla* Gmelin, 1788, Linnaeus Syst. Nat. (ed. 13) 1: 88. *Mustela zorilla* Cuvier (1798, Tabl. élém. Hist. nat. Anim.: 116) is not a new name but just a new combination of Gmelin's name as is clear from Cuvier's reference to "*Viverra zorilla* L.". The type-species of the genus *Zorilla* I. Geoffroy, 1826, consequently is *Viverra zorilla* Gmelin, 1788. Gmelin gives as the locality of his species "*America australi*" and refers to various previous authors (Schreber, Buffon, and Gumilla). It seems to me that what should be done is to select a lectotype for Gmelin's species from among the specimens discussed by the authors to which he refers. Only if this is done and the identity of Gmelin's species is established and thereby also that of Geoffroy's genus *Zorilla*, have discussions on the status of the latter any sense. I would suggest therefore that the mammalogists concerned first decide about the identity of Gmelin's species, at least if no lectotype for that has already been selected, which, judging by the text of the application, is not the case.

(2) As *Mustela zorilla* as used by Cuvier (1798) is not a new name but nothing but *Viverra zorilla* Gmelin transferred to the genus *Mustela*, it is incorrect to have the name *zorilla* Cuvier, 1798 suppressed under the plenary powers, as no such name exists.

(3) A third problem which I should like to comment upon is the status of E. Geoffroy's (1803) 'Catalogue des Mammifères du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle', which according to Dr. Morrison-Scott is not published. After examination of the copy of this publication in the Leiden Museum and after consulting the Code and especially Art. 8, I cannot see why this book should be considered as not published. It is reproduced in ink on paper by regular printing, it is issued for the purpose of scientific, public, and permanent record, and it was distributed free. In our copy the following citation is written on the fly leaf: "Le catalogue des Mammifères du Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, rédigé par Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, imprimé en 1803 n'a jamais été mis en vente; mais il a été distribué, tant à l'étranger qu'en France, à un assez grand nombre de zoologistes, et il est cité dans tous les traités de mammalogie. Cf. Catalogue méthodique de la collection des Mammifères de la collection des oiseaux et des collections annexes par M. Isidore G. St. Hilaire et M. M. Florent Prévost et Pucheran Paris 1851. Introduction V, et note 2." As the book has been printed, properly distributed and cited in all or practically all important mammological treatises, as is confirmed by our Curator of Mammals, Mr. A. M. Husson, I do not see any reason why this book should be unavailable nomenclatorially or even why it should be suppressed. Mr. Husson believes that a suppression of this work will cause an undesirably great number of changes in currently adopted names in mammology.